

second with medical applications, from blindness to biliary disorders; the third with psychotherapeutic applications, from alcoholism to absenteeism. On the basis of the evidence presented the uncommitted reader is unlikely to be persuaded of the value of the procedures or to expect much more from the remaining three volumes in the series.

**THE PHYSIOPATHOGENESIS OF THE EPILEPSIES** Edited by H. Gastaut, H. Jasper, J. Bancaud, and A. Waktregny. (Pp. xxi+316, illustrated). Thomas: Springfield, Illinois, U.S.A., 1969.

This record of symposia held in Marseilles in 1966 has the usual characteristics of the breed. It contains much repetition, opinion confused with fact, and incomplete coverage of the subject, but gives access to many expert opinions while work is still in progress. The sections are of varying quality. The first, on 'generalized epilepsies of functional, metabolic, or genetic nature', contains little new material and, like the second section on 'the physiopathogenesis of generalized epilepsies of organic nature', shows a swing away from the centrencephalic concept among European workers, but an alarming confusion between aetiology and localization in the classification of seizures. Part 3 (the neurophysiological basis of generalized epilepsies) is much more rewarding and is strongly recommended. A discussion on nomenclature is not helpful, but a final chapter by Jasper is full of ideas for further development.

It is unfortunate that it has taken so long to publish these symposia. Editorial work is poor, despite lavish production. Translations are adequate if not elicited, but no language contains the barbarism 'phenomenae'. This is a book for the specialist.

J. A. SIMPSON

**PROGRESS IN MENTAL HEALTH** Edited by Hugh Freeman. (Pp. xiv+346; illustrated; Churchill: London. 1969. 60s.).

A typical report of conference proceedings is like a notice-board hung with posters announcing what the contributors are up to. Participants gather for all kinds of devious purposes, but evidently feel the need for respectability. Hence the brief conference report which, alas, is all that remains for posterity to gather up.

The present volume is better than most such ventures. Of the numerous papers presented to the 7th International Congress on Mental Health in London in August 1968, 50 have been selected for publication, and the galaxy of great names is certainly impressive. Since the meeting was organized by the World Federation for Mental Health the emphasis is less on purely clinical matters than on problems of the promotion of psychiatric care. An interesting change of emphasis from earlier discussions is detectable: instead of advocating rather hazy concepts of mental health, energy is now directed to achieving an extension of psychiatric services. Ignorance, apathy, and ideologies are identified as the main obstacles, the attack on which is to be guided by scientific studies; examples reported in the volume include, for example, epidemiological investigations of attitudes to community services for the mentally ill.

Other sections present useful contributions on the themes of childhood disorder, social psychiatry, professional education, experiments in service organization, and the nature of social conflict. The last of these may or may not be science but is certainly exciting reading. A final section is devoted to theoretical problems, with high-quality papers by Margaret Mead, John Bowlby, Paul Halmos, and Sir Dennis Hill.

All in all, a miscellany for which the editor deserves congratulations.

NORMAN KREITMAN

**THE MANAGEMENT OF ALCOHOLISM** By Bruce Ritson and Christine Hassall (Pp. v + 114; illustrated with tables; 25s.) Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1970.

In 1962 the Ministry of Health advised regional hospital boards that facilities for the treatment of alcoholism in special units should be available in every region. The Alcoholism Unit at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, which was established by Dr. Henry Walton in 1963, has served as a model for several others.

This book derives largely from the authors' experiences of treating alcoholics on the unit, and from research accomplished under its aegis. There is an excellent introduction by Dr. Walton, which gives a concise yet comprehensive account of the principles of management and their application in practice. This is followed by useful chapters describing in detail the treatment of alcoholism in specialized clinics, the characteristics of, and the prognosis for alcoholics. Other topics covered are research methodology, young alcoholics, and suicide.

Medical and nursing staff appointed to an alcoholism unit will find this book useful preliminary reading. It can also be recommended to others, whose work brings them in contact with alcoholics. It gives them the indications for treatment in such a unit and a realistic view of the results, which can be achieved.

C. S. MELLOR

**PHYSICIAN'S BOOK COMPENDIUM 1969-1970** Edited by Max Celnick. (Pp. xxvi + 846; £14). Dekker: New York. 1970.

This very expensive book is the inaugural edition of an annual publication. It lists more than 10,000 books in all fields of medicine classified according to speciality. Short summaries are apparently based on the publishers' blurbs rather than on critical reviews. Useful for libraries only.

## NOTICE

### 3RD ASIAN AND OCEANIAN CONGRESS OF NEUROLOGY

Bombay, 29 November to 5 December 1971. Subjects: stereotaxy and electro-physiological advances in neurology; familial and genetic disorders of nervous system; neuropharmacology and uses of new drugs in neurology; vascular disorders of CNS; nutritional and other tropical disorders of nervous system. Details: Dr. Gajendra Sinh, The Neurological Society of India, 534 Sandhurst Bridge, Bombay 7.